STATE OF CALIFORNIA GRAY DAVIS, Governor

COMMISSION ON TEACHER CREDENTIALING

1900 Capitol Avenue Sacramento, California 95814-4213

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

1430 N Street Sacramento, California 95814

Date: March 21, 2003

To: BTSA Directors

From: Margaret Olebe Tom Lugo Administrator, Manager,

California Commission on California Department of

Teacher Credentialing Education

The purpose of this memo is to express the support of the BTSA Task Force, representing the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing and the California Department of Education, and the Cluster Leadership Team for the work of local program directors during this time of uncertainty.

Since the startup of the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program in 1992, local program directors, cluster leadership and task force members have faced a series of challenges as they sought to establish support for beginning teachers as an essential component of teacher development in California. At first there were challenges in defining and building the program; then there were challenges in scaling up and building capacity; and now we are faced with uncertainties about resources and possible restructuring. We want to assure you that your Cluster Leadership Team and the Task Force will continue to provide necessary technical assistance during these difficult times. In addition to ongoing support for BTSA program implementation, continuing support is available for program sponsors that are in the process of writing to the SB 2042 standards, for those that are in the submission process, and for the programs that are beginning implementation.

The California Department of Education and the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing recognize what BTSA directors, support providers, district staff, university faculty, and all of those who believe in the importance of supporting beginning teachers have accomplished. Professionals across the state and the nation speak enthusiastically about what has been created in California. It is clear that through your commitment, passion, and hard work, you have achieved one of the most elusive goals in education – high quality, job-embedded professional development. Teachers associated with BTSA over the past decade know personally how this work has benefited them and their students. We are committed to working toward ensuring that on-going support for beginning teachers will continue.

The last paragraph in the West Ed's Final Report of the Independent Evaluation of BTSA (April, 2002) states:

Overall . . . the achievement of BTSA is remarkable. The language used by Task Force members, CCs, PDCs, program directors, SPs, and others is the language of family and community. In a state as large and complex as California, and within the current policy environment, the importance of maintaining a sense of communities of learners cannot be overstated.

Thank you for creating and maintaining safe, high quality learning communities for new teachers. Though the next step for BTSA and induction is unclear, we believe that individually and together we can sustain the reform initiated by the BTSA community.

